

VOICES

of Darfur

JULY 2014

Elevating Craft into Art

An Interview with
Amal Mohamed

Newly Displaced Face Challenges in Crowded Camps

*Volatile situation has led to
massive displacements*

Unprecedented Shift in Pastoralist Practices

*Scientists warn of long-
term environmental impact*

Theatre Artists Promote Peace, Social Cohesion

*Committed thespians
reknitting community fabric*



AFRICAN UNION - UNITED NATIONS
MISSION IN DARFUR
(UNAMID)



Examples of the art pieces made by Ms. Amal Mohamed. While the form of her pieces derives from their intended function as household items, the artistry of her work has developed a distinct reputation that has led to the presence of her pieces at various exhibits, including in Khartoum. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In presenting the July 2014 issue of *Voices of Darfur*, I'm pleased to share with you the news that the magazine recently won an Award of Excellence in the annual APEX competition. APEX awards are based on graphic design, editorial content and the ability to achieve overall communications excellence. Last year, the magazine won a Grand Award in the same annual competition.

This magazine takes the work of a dedicated team, and without the tireless efforts of our graphic designers, photographers, writers and translators, UNAMID would not have an award-winning magazine. The current issue before you, like other recent issues of *Voices*, contains news, features and interviews not only about unique aspects of life in Darfur but also about UNAMID's ongoing efforts to facilitate lasting peace in the region.

In "Newly Displaced Face Challenges in Crowded Camps," Ms. Sharon Lukunka offers an in-depth look at how, since January 2014, a new wave of conflict has generated significant humanitarian needs across Darfur. With ongoing fighting between Government forces and armed movements, along with inter- and intra-communal violence, the volatile situation in Darfur has led to new population displacements. According to OCHA, in the first half of 2014 alone, nearly 400,000 people were displaced in Darfur, with more than 250,000 still unable to return home.

In "Farmers and Nomads: Toward Interlocked Markets of Reciprocity," Mr. Albert González Farran describes how Darfur's security situation has led to an unprecedented shift in pastoralist practices, which scientists indicate could have a long-term, detrimental impact on the environment. Despite the many similarities between farmers and nomads in Darfur, the long conflict between the settled farmers and the nomadic pastoralists not only has slowed the pace of Darfur's economy, but also has created a significant impact on the security situation here.

In "Theatre Artists Promote Peace, Social Cohesion," Mr. Emadeldin Rijal writes about how rifts between different sections of Darfuri society are being ad-

ressed by groups of socially committed theatre artists, who have been collaborating with Government officials and NGOs across Darfur to build support for peace. As policymakers continue to work on creating a viable development roadmap, theatre artists here are continuing to play their part in helping to reknit Darfur's social fabric in the hope of energizing communities to foster positive change across the region.

In "Programmes Focus on Weapons Control, Community Security," Ms. Lukunka writes about how initiatives to reduce the proliferation of light weapons that pose a threat to civilians are making progress in helping stabilise communities and improve security across Darfur. The article details how UNAMID's DDR section has been working with UNDP and other stakeholders to develop several Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) projects designed to have a lasting impact.

In "A Shoemaker Challenges Traditional Gender Roles," Mr. Hamid Abdulsalam presents a photo essay designed to highlight the unique work of Ms. Kaltoum Yagoub, who not only performs many of the traditional tasks commonly associated in Darfuri culture with the roles of wife, mother, sister and daughter, but also works as a shoemaker, a profession typically undertaken by Sudanese men.

Finally, in our cover feature, "Elevating Craft into Art," Ms. Ala Mayyahi presents an interview with bead artist Ms. Amal Mohamed. In the interview, Ms. Mohamed describes how the form of her pieces derive from their intended function as household items, but with a distinctive artistry that has led to the presence of her pieces at several art exhibits. Ms. Mohamed, who works during the day as an executive television director, also describes the vital role artists can play in the peace process.

As *Voices of Darfur* continues to evolve as a news magazine, we welcome your feedback. To send comments by email, please put "Letters to the Editor / Voices of Darfur" in the subject line and send the email to unamid-publicinformation@un.org.

Kirk L. Kroeker
Head of Publications

ON THE COVER



Artist Amal Mohamed, from *El Fasher*, North Darfur, is pictured in her house showing an example of her beadwork. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



Two children are pictured in a new settlement in the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

VOICES of Darfur

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Darfur Dialogue Committee Formed in El Fasher

The Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation (DIDC) Implementation Committee formed on 26 May 2014 in a ceremony hosted by UNAMID in El Fasher, North Darfur. The DIDC mechanism, stipulated in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), is designed to consolidate peace in Darfur, promote confidence-building and encourage reconciliation and unity. The DIDC is facilitated by the African Union, the State of Qatar and UNAMID.

The Implementation Committee is set up to be the governing and implementing arm of the DIDC process to ensure its full ownership by Darfuris. It is an independent body consisting of various representatives of the DDPD parties, civil society, youth and women's groups, academia, business, and internally displaced populations.

The Committee Chair and two Deputies of the Committee are Saddig Adam Abdallah (Saddig Wada'a), Muhamed Ahmed Haroon and Suad Adam Albarjo.

The Committee is expected not only to ensure all appropriate preparations in overseeing and conducting the dialogues and consultations across Darfur, but also to guarantee thorough documentation and analysis of the process and its outcomes. The Committee is tasked with ensuring that the process remains inclusive, transparent and credible.

Apart from the members of the Committee, the event was attended by the Assistant to the President of Sudan, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour, an African Union representative, Ambassador Ibrahim Kamara, the Ambassador of Qatar, Rashid Abdel-Rahman Al-Neami, the Chair of Darfur



The Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation (DIDC) Implementation Committee formed on 26 May 2014 in a ceremony hosted by UNAMID in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Regional Authority, El-Tijani Seisi, and the UNAMID Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

The JSR expressed hope that the DIDC process will become a crucial building block in the national dialogue. "The DIDC,

properly conducted, should be a dress rehearsal for the Darfuris to participate effectively and articulate their concerns in the proposed national dialogue," UNAMID's Head added, noting that it is therefore imperative that conducive conditions exist for free expression of opinions. ■

Mission Supports Local Mediation in North Darfur Conflict



On 5 June 2014, more than 250 representatives of the Beni Hussein and Abbala tribes gathered in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, for a two-day reconciliation meeting. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

More than 250 representatives of the Beni Hussein and Abbala tribes gathered in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, for a two-day reconciliation meeting that commenced on 5 June 2014. The meeting was designed

to address outstanding issues between the tribes in attendance and diffuse tensions in the area. A reconciliation committee consisting of tribal representatives, native administration leaders, members of the security man-

agement committee, officials from the Government of Sudan and Sheikh Musa Hilal initiated the proceedings.

The King and Shartai of the Fur, the Nazir, sheikhs and umdas of the Reizegat, the Nazir of the Beni Hussein, the Amir of the Tama, other significant tribal leaders from Kabkabiya, Saraf Umra and El Sereif, as well as Government, military and police personnel, participated in the conference.

The gathering followed an escalation of conflict that resulted in the blockading of roads, thereby preventing supplies, including food, medicine and fuel, from entering the El Sereif locality of North Darfur. UNAMID,

which played a role in organizing the event and supporting it logistically, has been assisting similar reconciliation efforts since the inception of the conflict.

Addressing the participants, UNAMID's Head of Office, Sector North, Mr. Mohamed EL-Amine Souef, affirmed the Mission's commitment to carrying out its core mandate of protecting civilians, supporting local-level mediation and facilitating humanitarian assistance.

On 7 June 2014, the reconciliation conference concluded with the resolution of pending issues between the Beni Hussein and Abbala tribes and the agreement to reopen the roads leading to El Sereif. ■

UNAMID Chief Inaugurates Rural Courthouse, Meets Community Leaders

On 1 May 2014, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas visited the Malha and Mellit localities in North Darfur to inaugurate a new rural courthouse in Malha and meet with community leaders in Mellit.

In Malha, UNAMID's Rule of Law Section had partnered with Jibal Midoub Development Organization to build the new courthouse and bring judicial services closer to the people living in remote areas. The inauguration ceremony, attended by Chief Judge Taj Elsir Othman, Head of the North Darfur Judiciary, and Judge Alhadi Ali Abdallah, Head of the North Darfur Legal Department, drew hundreds of people from the locality.

In his speech at the event, JSR Chambas commended the partnership between UNAMID and the North Darfur

judicial authorities. "Facilitating access to justice for remote and rural communities is the main purpose of this project," he said. "Today, we hand over this project to you to provide the opportunity for every man, woman and child to receive judicial services under Sudanese Law."

Chief Judge Othman also delivered a speech during the inauguration ceremony, and said that justice is the fundamental basis of ruling nations and is indispensable for the peace, stability and prosperity of countries and communities.

In Mellit, JSR Chambas met with local leaders, including representatives from women's groups and civil society organizations. During his meetings, he emphasized UNAMID's role in peacekeeping and his role as Chief Mediator in relation to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).



On 1 May 2014, UNAMID JSR Mohamed Ibn Chambas visited the Malha and Mellit localities in North Darfur to inaugurate a new rural courthouse in Malha and meet with community leaders in Mellit. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

"The DDPD remains the main framework for achieving hoped for peace in Darfur," said the JSR. "I welcome President Bashir's national dialogue initiative and encourage all parties to engage with it in a serious and determined effort toward achieving peace not only in Darfur but also in the whole of Sudan."

Additionally, the JSR briefed the Mellit community leaders on

the outcomes of the Implementation Follow-up Commission meeting that was hosted on 28 April 2014 at UNAMID headquarters, where Qatari delegates signed a US\$88 million grant agreement to finance the recovery and reconstruction priorities of the Darfur Development Strategy launched at the International Donors Conference in Doha in April 2013. ■



On 13 June 2014 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Mr. Irfan Jaffery (centre), a UNAMID contractor, is guided by Sudanese authorities at El Fasher airport, having been freed the day before following 94 days in captivity. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 1 June 2014 in El Fasher, North Darfur, a man works in a tobacco factory with his nose and mouth covered to avoid inhaling the dust. *Tombac*, one of North Darfur's main cash crops, had been made in the region since the 19th century. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Mission Reaches Out to El Sereif Community

On 20 May 2014, UNAMID hosted an outreach event in the El Sereif locality of North Darfur to promote a culture of peace and support local-level mediation efforts by fostering community reconciliation and solidarity. Thousands of El Sereif residents, many of whom were displaced from clashes that took place in early 2013 in and around Jebel Amir, turned out for the festivities, which included speeches, cultural performances, football matches, volleyball tournaments and horse races.

The main event was the football tournament, with eight teams having competed in games leading up to the final matches on 20 May. While one team ultimately won the final game, all the other

teams cheered for the victory in a spirit of solidarity. “We are happy to have won the competition, but we won it for each and every citizen of El Sereif,” said the winning team’s captain, Mr. Abdalla Abdurrahman, who dedicated all the games to peace.

Despite the slow pace of the ongoing reconciliation efforts between the parties involved in the clashes in North Darfur, UNAMID continues to work with community leaders to support mediation efforts and ensure that the needs of the communities are met. Sports events, such as the one held on 20 May, are designed to support these mediation efforts by forging stronger community ties.

“Sport helps us in spreading messages of peace, driv-



On 20 May 2014, UNAMID hosted an outreach event in the El Sereif locality of North Darfur to promote a culture of peace and support local-level mediation efforts by fostering community reconciliation and solidarity. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

ing social change and meeting the Millennium Development Goals,” said United Nations Security-General Ban Ki-moon in a message delivered on 6 April 2014, the Interna-

tional Day of Sport for Development and Peace. In his message, Mr. Ban urged everyone around the world to harness the potential of sport to build a better world for all. ■

International Day of Peacekeepers Celebrated



On 29 May 2014, UNAMID peacekeepers celebrate the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers in El Fasher, North Darfur. In addition to the solemn commemoration services, the event included cultural performances. Photo by Kirk L. Kroeker, UNAMID.

On 29 May 2014, UNAMID peacekeepers celebrated the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers in El Fasher, North Darfur. Held under the theme “a force for peace, a force for change, and a force for the future,” the event was attended by UNAMID

Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas, North Darfur Deputy Governor Al Fatih Abdulaziz, along with military, police and civilian personnel from UNAMID and Government of Sudan officials.

The programme in El Fasher opened with a military

and police parade; the lowering of the AU and UN flags; the observance of one minute of silence; and a wreath-laying ceremony to honour those peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the line of duty. In addition to the solemn commemoration services, the event included cultural performances by UNAMID personnel and songs sung by students from the Zain Al Abideen primary school.

UNAMID’s Chief conveyed UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message for the occasion, highlighting the history of UN peacekeeping since the establishment of the organization in 1948. “Looking to the future, we can be confident that as new challenges emerge, United Nations peacekeeping will evolve to meet them,” said the JSR, quoting Mr. Ban.

The Secretary-General’s message commended military, police and civilian peacekeepers for

their commitment to stabilising communities, protecting civilians, promoting rule of law and advancing human rights. It also expressed grief for those peacekeepers giving their lives while serving the cause of peace.

In reading out the Secretary-General’s message, the JSR underscored the changing nature of peacekeeping. “United Nations peacekeeping is modernising to ensure that it can tackle tomorrow’s peace and security challenges,” he said. “It is deploying new technologies such as unarmed, unmanned aerial vehicles, refining its practices to better protect civilians, and boosting the representation of women among its ranks while strengthening its partnerships with regional organizations.”

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Governor Abdulaziz praised UNAMID’s efforts to help bring peace to Darfur. ■



On 30 June 2014 in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, a farmer crosses a security gate manned by UNAMID troops. More than 4,000 IDPs live inside a haven constructed by UNAMID following an attack on their villages by armed men. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



On 26 June 2014 in El Fasher, North Darfur, UNAMID Police Officer Rehema Shaibu shares a smile with language specialist Salwa Hamad while meeting with newly displaced Darfuris in the Zam Zam IDP camp. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Greener Darfur the Focus of World Environment Day

On the occasion of World Environment Day, celebrated every year on 5 June, the North Darfur Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNAMID, organized a photo exhibit highlighting the impact of waste management and promoting tree-planting for a greener Darfur.

The event, hosted at the University of El Fasher, was held under the theme “Sudan Raises Its Voice for the Environment.” Festivities included a cultural programme, replete with traditional songs, drama performances and poetry recitals.

UNAMID, for its part, has been undertaking a Darfur-wide tree-planting programme as part of the Mission’s ongoing effort to reduce its environmental footprint. “Trees help

offset carbon emissions from other sources such as diesel generators and vehicles,” said Emmanuel Mollel, Head of UNAMID’s Water and Environmental Protection Section. To date, peacekeepers have planted 270,000 trees in Mission compounds and bases across the region. This year alone, UNAMID planted 4,000 trees at its headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur.

In addition to tree-planting, UNAMID is employing other greening initiatives to offset harmful emissions, such as using renewable sources of energy and implementing waste-reduction programmes. Altogether, UNAMID has installed 216 solar-powered water heaters, 10 solar-powered borehole pumps and 340 solar-powered street lights.

Segregating food and recyclable waste from solid waste



On 5 June 2014, a peacekeeper from Nepal plants a tree to mark World Environment Day. UNAMID has been undertaking a Darfur-wide tree-planting programme as part of the Mission’s ongoing effort to reduce its environmental footprint. Photo by Owies Elfaki, UNAMID.

is another green procedure implemented in all UNAMID bases. The Mission uses food waste to produce compost, an organic fertilizer, and recyclable waste—juice boxes and plastic bottles—to help cultivate saplings. Such measures reduce

the final volume of food waste disposed in landfills, which, in turn, reduces methane emissions. The Mission continues to work with both local and international partners to promote green practices and raise awareness of environmental issues. ■



On 11 June 2014 in the Zam Zam camp for displaced people in North Darfur, a woman carries blankets on her head. Thousands of people, mostly women, children and the elderly, sought refuge in Zam Zam following armed clashes in North Darfur. The displaced continue to need basic services, such as water, food, healthcare and shelter. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Newly Displaced Face Challenges in Crowded Camps

With ongoing fighting between Government forces and armed movements, along with a rise in inter- and intra-communal violence, the volatile situation in Darfur has led to massive population displacements.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA

Since January 2014, a new wave of conflict has generated significant humanitarian needs across Darfur. With ongoing fighting between Government forces and armed movements, along with inter- and intra-communal violence, the volatile situation in Darfur has led to massive popu-

lation displacements. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in the first half of 2014, nearly 400,000 people were displaced in Darfur, with more than 250,000 still unable to return home. OCHA statistics indicate that there are currently

2.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region.

One example of the impact of these numbers on existing IDP camp infrastructure can be found in Zam Zam, an IDP camp in North Darfur where many people from the state's various localities

have sought refuge, creating a burden on already overstretched infrastructure. Zam Zam is one of Darfur's oldest IDP camps, and is equipped with schools, market areas, community centres and even minimal functioning utilities. Despite the relative stability of the camp, an influx of 50,000 new people into this community this year alone has led to food shortages and other humanitarian issues.

Most of the other camps in Darfur have experienced a similar influx of newly displaced. Ms. Jamila Tijani is one of the recently displaced who had to flee her village near Tawilla, North Darfur, following attacks by armed groups. She and her family arrived in Zam Zam to seek protection and assistance. "The attackers burned our houses and looted most of our belongings," says Jamila. "Since we arrived in the camp, we have had no water and no healthcare; we have had to walk long distances just to fetch water."

In a particularly poignant example of the dire situation in Zam Zam, pregnant women, having fled their villages, have been giving birth in make-shift tents or in otherwise unsanitary conditions. Ms. Awatif Ibrahim recounts how she lost her baby while giving birth, despite assistance from a nearby Zam Zam clinic. Such stories are not uncommon, and highlight the pressure the conflict is putting on already overburdened temporary infrastructures of IDP camps in Darfur.

Ms. Halima Shumu, also newly arrived in Zam Zam, recounts a similar story. She fled her village of Kobe Asa near Tawila, North Darfur, following clashes in the area, and is now living on the outskirts of Zam Zam. On the night of the worst fighting, when it became clear to her that she and her family would need to leave, she rushed to her neighbour to borrow a donkey cart to transport her pregnant daughter, Ishraqa, who gave birth in a tent with the assistance of a midwife and her mother.

Those who manage to be registered by UN agencies in IDP camps receive



On 11 June 2014 in the Zam Zam camp for displaced people in North Darfur, a family takes shelter from the sun. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in the first half of 2014, nearly 400,000 people were displaced in Darfur, with more than 250,000 still unable to return home. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“UNAMID works hard in coordination with authorities and the humanitarian country team in assuring the protection and well-being of the displaced population, Darfur-wide.”

—Oriano Micaletti

direct assistance, including food, blankets and other items, while others must rely on assistance from family members, relatives and friends. Since the arrival of the tens of thousands of newly displaced people in Zam Zam, there have been several reported cases of malnutrition among children. Displaced families, forced to leave their means of making a living behind, typically arrive in the camps with little or no money. "We have no money to pay for water or firewood; the majority of families here are depending on one meagre meal per day," says Ms. Shumu. "Children have been sharing a small bowl of porridge with other children."

Although humanitarian workers have been struggling to address the mass dis-

placements in the region since the beginning of the year, they are faced with challenges of their own, including accessing restricted areas. Humanitarian agencies operating in Darfur are working with UNAMID and Government authorities to provide basic services to the newly displaced as best they can. In this context, protecting civilians remains a top priority for UNAMID. To coordinate these efforts, the Mission conducts a regular meeting with UN agencies and Government officials about the rapidly changing situation and the best way to address it.

"UNAMID works hard in coordination with authorities and the humanitarian country team in assuring the protection and well-being of the displaced pop-



On 11 February 2014, UNAMID peacekeepers escort a World Food Programme (WFP) convoy on its way from UNAMID's base in El Fasher to the Nifasha IDP camp. The convoy, consisting of 10 WFP trucks, with two containers each, travelled from El Fasher to deliver 350 metric tonnes of food to two IDP camps in North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

ulation, Darfur-wide,” says Mr. Oriano Micaletti, the Officer-in-Charge of UNAMID’s Humanitarian Protection Strategy Coordination Division. “We work to ensure that their rights are respected and their living conditions are acceptable and provided with basic needs.”

Mr. Micaletti explains that as the Mission works to protect civilians, particularly in conflict areas, UNAMID provides the space in which humanitarian partners can operate safely. “We are working with the humanitarian community to support the people and provide them with necessary services,” he says.

In addition to its coordination work with humanitarian agencies, a central component of the Mission’s mandate, UNAMID has continued to focus on physical protection of civilians and on creating a secure environment. In early March, as one example of UNAMID’s protection activities, North Darfur clashes resulted in the displacement of about 80,000 people, most of whom sought protection near UNAMID’s base in Saraf Umra. The peacekeepers stationed there offered direct assistance to the civilians seeking aid. UNAMID deployed reinforcements from nearby bases to help manage the situation, and dispatched a medical team to treat those suffering from wounds and sickness. In

the process of providing support, the Mission airlifted more than one dozen wounded to EL Fasher Hospital for medical attention.

During the three weeks the crisis lasted, some 25 expectant mothers safely delivered their babies with the assistance of the UNAMID medics. UNAMID peacekeepers provided water and food to the displaced until World Food Programme (WFP) aid arrived in UNAMID convoys from El Fasher. To help reduce the tribal tensions in the area, UNAMID’s Civil Affairs Officers brokered a ceasefire and a local-level peace agreement designed to pave the way for the return of the displaced to their communities. While receiving support from UNAMID’s base, no civilian was attacked or wounded.

Several other similar examples highlight the Mission’s approach to protecting civilians, facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance and supporting local-level agreements to end tribal disputes. On 22 March, displaced people arrived at UNAMID’s Korma base for protection following additional North Darfur clashes. And on 1 April, some 250 IDPs, mostly women and children, arrived at UNAMID’s Mellit base seeking protection. During the following days, an estimated 9,000 IDPs gathered outside the base seeking protection. As

in other such cases, UNAMID peacekeepers provided security, food, water and medical assistance to the IDPs.

In addition to providing physical protection for civilians in Darfur, near bases and during patrols, the Mission has conducted hundreds of humanitarian-related escorts so far this year alone, with the goal being to ensure safe and timely access for humanitarian workers. Due to this work, and despite humanitarian resources being overstretched, recent arrivals in North and South Darfur have been receiving the basic life-saving assistance they need. However, issues remain. According to OCHA’s latest report, the worsening situation in Darfur and an influx of people fleeing war in South Sudan helped push to almost seven million the number needing aid in Sudan.

“The Sudan humanitarian response plan has been revised to reflect the deteriorating situation in Darfur, the influx of new refugees from South Sudan, and Sudan’s acute malnutrition crisis,” said Mr. Ali Al-Za’tari, the UN’s Sudan humanitarian coordinator. “Given these new needs, aid agencies in Sudan have reassessed their priorities and refocused primarily on the immediate delivery of life-saving assistance.”

Mr. Al-Za’tari went on to say that the water and sanitation services for newly displaced people who have fled to Darfur’s camps are now severely overstretched, giving rise to the spread of diseases such as jaundice and hepatitis E.

While media reports have indicated that UNAMID experienced difficulties during its start-up phase in 2008, and struggled at that time with significant challenges, especially in terms of positioning required equipment for troops in the field, the Mission’s leadership has worked to address these challenges and contribute more effectively to the protection of civilians in Darfur in several key ways. The Mission, designed to serve as a deterrent to violence with military, police and civilian personnel deployed throughout Darfur, implemented a new strategy in 2010 to increase the number of active patrols each day. The 24-hour patrol strategy has extended to the deep field and includes patrols for civilians even in their day-to-day activities of collecting firewood, water and grass.

Although hostilities continue in some areas of Darfur due to tribal clashes, criminal elements and confrontation between armed movements and the Government, the Mission has revised and updated its protection strategy, relying on a multidimensional and community-based approach with a revamped early-warning mechanism designed to address the needs of populations under threats by reaching them quickly through the rapid formation of response teams. These Darfur-wide mechanisms are designed to strengthen UNAMID's ability to prevent violence, to address emerging situations proactively and to react to humanitarian and protection needs with greater efficacy.

This multidimensional approach combines physical protection measures, political engagements and the establishment of a protective environment to

enable UNAMID and its partners to address and continue to respond to the recent clashes in a more coordinated, harmonized and comprehensive manner with the effective cooperation of the Government of Sudan, the movements and concerned communities in the affected areas. While the primary responsibility to protect civilians in Darfur rests with the Government of Sudan, UNAMID complements that work. The Mission's revamped protection strategy includes not only an increase in the

number of daily patrols but also the deployment of civilian staff to critical areas; closer cooperation with internally displaced people and their leaders; and closer coordination at the grassroots level with Government bodies.

All these efforts are designed to refine and tune the Mission's protection strategies with the ultimate goal of more rapidly responding to reports of violence and displacement, and to more quickly facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance where it is needed most. ■

In addition to its coordination work with humanitarian agencies, a central component of the Mission's mandate, UNAMID has continued to focus on physical protection of civilians and on creating a secure environment.

On 30 June 2014 in Khor Abeche, South Darfur, a woman rides a donkey loaded with water while UNAMID peacekeepers conduct a routine patrol around the nearby IDP camp. On 26 March, some 3,000 displaced people took refuge inside UNAMID's base in Khor Abeche in anticipation of an attack on their homes. The Mission provided protection, shelter and water to the IDPs, and worked with the humanitarian community to offer other emergency support. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.





On 5 October 2013 in Forobaranga, West Darfur, cattle traders talk in the market near Sudan's border with Chad. Forobaranga is said to have one of the biggest animal markets in Africa, with exports to Libya, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Farmers and Nomads: Toward Interlocked Markets of Reciprocity

Darfur's security situation is leading to an unprecedented shift in pastoralist practices, which scientists indicate could have a long-term and detrimental impact on the environment.

BY ALBERT GONZÁLEZ FARRAN

One of the main sources of the conflict in Darfur is competition over natural resources, including water, arable land and other environmental resources that form the foundation for the livelihoods of millions of Darfuris. Many communities in this arid region of Sudan have been surviving for generations in a place where water resources are scarce and where fertile lands are rare. Inter- and intra-communal clashes have erupted over disputes related to these limited resources. One of the main sources of tension leading to these disputes is the seeming incompatibility between the objectives of farmers and pastoralists.

Despite their many similarities, the

long conflict between the settled farmers, who cultivate the land for food, and the nomadic pastoralists, who tend to the many different types of animal herds in the region, not only has slowed the pace of Darfur's economy, but also has created a significant impact on the security situation here. Most of Darfur's pastoralists have moved their animals seasonally according to the weather patterns. In the past, these cattle movements have been made near croplands, which sometimes resulted in the cattle damaging viable crops and leading to conflicts with farming communities.

In some parts of Darfur, including East Darfur and West Darfur, local-level

mediation efforts have led to agreements about when cattle can pass certain areas and how far they must pass from crops. In other parts of Darfur, such negotiations continue but remain unresolved. One of the original conflicts in Darfur dates to the 1932 clashes between pastoralists and farmers over claims to land. In recent years, observers have attributed the steady escalation of such frictions to local authorities neglecting to make formal arrangements for seasonal movement of nomadic pastoralists across Darfur. As the desert continues to encroach on verdant areas, nomadic pastoralists have abandoned the previous routes they have travelled in search of land

for grazing. This shift has heightened the tension between the two groups.

Compounding this situation is the absence of a formal, Darfur-wide schedule for the movement of the nomads' herds. Tension with the farmers typically becomes much more acute during harvest time, when entire crops can easily be destroyed by hungry passing cattle. The conflict between farmers and pastoralists highlights the scarcity of Darfur's resources, especially water. There has been a steady increase in the number of Darfuris who need access to these resources, and an expansion of agricultural lands along with an increase in the general numbers of animals tended by the pastoralists have led to the outbreak of larger tribal clashes.

In one example of how these disputes have been resolved, a West Darfur committee consisting of farmers and pastoralists, with the support of UNAMID, demarcated acceptable cattle routes that are 150 metres wide. The demarcation applies to the nomads, who must keep their animals within the boundaries of the routes as they travel, and to the farmers, who must cultivate only the land outside the routes. The committee set dates for the pastoralists to move their animals from one part of Darfur to another. Starting 28 February each year, this period, called the *talaga*, is the time cattle can pass through the farmlands following the harvest season.

The West Darfur committee set up several subcommittees to monitor the situation and report at weekly meetings. The subcommittees, which consist of union representatives for farmers and pastoralists, have been watching the new strategies closely to ensure their success in preventing friction and to address other issues that might arise as a barrier to prosperous agricultural practices.

The strategy has been hailed from many quarters as a positive step toward resolving the historic friction between pastoralists and farmers, but in recent years, other issues have come into play, specifically those of urbanization and mobility. In 2011, the Sudanese Government sponsored a conference in El Fasher, North Darfur, on peaceful coexistence. More than 600 people

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from different segments of Darfuri society attended the conference, which focused on ways to work toward better cooperation at all levels of society, including between pastoralists and farmers, by strengthening the role of Darfur's traditional civil administration structures. Those attending the conference discussed ways to find common ground, including legal aspects, between pastoralists and farmers.

In early 2012, Sudan sponsored a similar conference to identify strategies for dealing with farmer-pastoralist issues, including the cattle paths and the timing of the nomadic movements, and to develop ways to move forward on general tribal reconciliation. Sudan's official news agency reported that, as a result of the agreements made at these conferences, friction between pastoralists and farmers declined.

The West Darfur committee now has the support of national and international organizations, such as the Humanitarian Aid Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Animal Resources, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNAMID.

As many such efforts are being undertaken across Darfur, the issues currently being addressed relate not only to community groups and their needs, but also to the specific environmental issues that are emerging as a result of the security situation. A recent report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), one of the largest global environmental organizations, indicates that negative perceptions of pastoralism have been influenced by images of overgrazing and

On 5 October 2013 in Forobaranga, West Darfur, pastoralists guide their cattle to water near the Chad border. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



soil erosion around water sources, and by food insecurity during droughts. The report indicates that while pastoralism is usually portrayed as an environmental problem and an archaic form of land use, the practice represents an adaptation to an unpredictable environment.

The controversy associated with pastoralism, because of its impact on farming, is highly politicized in Darfur, with the different objectives between the two groups forming the basis for debates about the practice. “The politicization of the tribal conflict in Darfur is affecting farmers and nomads at the local level,” says Mr. Hassan Abdelaziz, president of the North Darfur Nomadic Network. “There isn’t any relationship between both sides; they have lost contact, making me think restarting dialogue to resolve this issue will be difficult.”

Ms. Magda Nassef, a project manager for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in El Fasher, North Darfur, says there is an urgent need to increase dialogue between community leaders and establish new migration rules. “People are not talking enough,” she says, indicating that Darfur needs pastoralists and farmers to restart their dialogue and focus together on the pressing issue of desertification. Mobility, one aspect of pastoralism that makes nomads capable of living and working in exceptionally arid environments, has been reduced in Darfur due to the conflict. The IUCN report indicates that dry ecosystems may be more ecologically resilient than has previously been thought, as long as some degree of livestock mobility or general resource-use rotation is retained. Unfortunately, the conflict in Darfur has made many areas inaccessible to nomads, and massive population displacements have led to extreme urbanization and city growth, with the most prominent examples being Nyala, South Darfur, and El Fasher, North Darfur.

The IUCN report indicates that stationary settlements that have established services and resources, especially water, ignore the wider ecological necessity of pastoralist mobility. In this framework, the concentration of livelihood activities in and around Darfur’s urban centres, an escalating trend in recent years, could ultimately lead to environmental degradation across the entire region. According to researchers



On 16 January 2014 in El Fasher, North Darfur, a local farmer waters her crops in a greenhouse constructed by the World Food Programme as part of a multifaceted project to address food shortage issues. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Ced Hesse and James MacGregor, co-authors of a recent study on pastoralism and drylands, livestock reared in pastoral systems provide a range of inputs to agriculture in what they call “interlocked markets of reciprocity.” These inputs, they say, contribute significantly to maintaining and increasing agricultural productivity, the latter through improved harvests to maintain the productivity of pastoral systems by providing crop residues to supplement livestock diets during the dry season.

In Darfur, rarely do farmers and gardeners use animal waste to fertilize their crops. Animal waste is not a product that is commonly commercialized in the region. Given that it isn’t widely used, indicating that there isn’t a significant amount of awareness about the appropriate procedures for applying it effectively to nourish crops, reports from Sudan’s Ministry of Environment indicate there is a risk of contaminating the groundwater systems that feed Darfur’s wells.

While scientists say that pastoralism not only does not degrade the environment, but also can lead to positive environmental results, the restriction on mobility due to the conflict in Darfur continues to have an impact on the ability for pastoralism to interlock successfully with the agricultural practices here. In an unfortunate trend now becoming a topic of some debate in meetings between nomads and farmers, pastoralism here is becoming more

like ranching, where the animals are kept in sedentary areas. “These ranches, which have been managed for stability in areas of climatic instability, lose their resilience to cope with climate change,” say Ced Hesse and James MacGregor.

Frictions between pastoralists and farmers are continuing in parts of Darfur, even as UNAMID and its partners are supporting mediation efforts to resolve disputes and determine peaceful settlements to the issues as they arise. Even so, environmentalists indicate that if the security situation is not addressed soon, the trend toward urbanization and ranching, both resulting from a volatile security situation, could lead to long-term and detrimental environmental results. Recognizing these issues as a pressing turning point for Darfuri culture, environmental organizations, community leaders and all those working toward peace in Darfur are supporting efforts to redirect the farmer-nomad relationships to where it was before the conflict, when peace prevailed in this now-troubled region.

Mr. Abdelaziz, echoing the sentiments of Darfur’s farmers and pastoralists, says he laments the impact of the ongoing conflict on the environment, and points out that, despite their reputation for environmental degradation, Darfur’s nomads are highly sensitive to the issues facing the region. “We are the first who are interested in keeping the environment stable,” he says. ■



Actors from El Fasher's Al Musrahia drama group perform in Al Nour Al Nasfia Basic School to raise awareness about road safety. Several performances, sponsored by UNAMID, were conducted by five local drama groups in schools around the city. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Theatre Artists Promote Peace, Social Cohesion

As the conflict continues, groups of socially committed theatre artists are collaborating with Government officials and NGOs across Darfur to build support for sustainable peace.

BY EMADELDIN RIJAL

The ongoing conflict in Darfur has resulted in a social, economic and political fabric that is tearing apart at the seams. Aside from the clashes between the Government of Sudan and armed groups that form one of the key elements of the conflict here, there are frequent waves of in-fighting triggered by deeply rooted communal differences. With divisions and rifts between different sections of Darfuri society becoming increasingly pronounced, stakeholders in the region have focused on the need for initiating dialogue and arriv-

ing at social consensus as a way to drive the peace process forward.

One method that is contributing to positive change is drama. "The performing arts are an important tool for carrying and conveying socially relevant messages to a diverse audience," says Dr. Fadlullah Abdalla, a theatre instructor in the College for Music and Drama at the Sudan University of Science and Technology. According to Dr. Abdalla, one of the best ways of creating dialogue at the community level is through theatre

because it can educate people about contemporary social and political issues while simultaneously entertaining them.

"We, as members of the theatrical community, are able to use our craft to inform Darfuris about peace, acceptance and coexistence in a neutral space," he avers, explaining how the dialogue between the actors onstage can lead to an immediate connection with the audience. At the end of the performance, he says, members of the audience can formulate perspectives

and opinions regarding the topics the thespians brought to life on the stage.

Several theatre and drama groups, operating under the umbrella of the Ministries of Culture across Darfur, are using their skill to play a role in highlighting specific concerns faced by Darfuri communities, especially at the grassroots level. These groups often perform in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and during large public gatherings, with the objective being to draw attention to issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, human rights, rule of law and so forth.

“Performance-based art enables individuals and communities to come together and engage in questions and concerns of relevance to all,” says Mr. Omer Ali, a 24-year-old member of the Arts Group for Peaceful Coexistence. “Moreover, it provides people with a few hours of relief from the grim realities forced upon them by the current situation in Darfur.”

Mr. Ali, who joined his troupe five years ago, has since helped enact numerous performances designed to spread messages of peaceful coexistence and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in different communities. He and other members of his group have participated in cultural events at both the national and the regional levels. Similarly, Ms. Zainab Abbaker, a singer and member of Mr. Ali’s group, writes songs focused on tackling gender issues. She says that good art should hold up a mirror to contemporary concerns, and notes that sustainable peace is the focus of most of her songwriting.

The Arts Group for Peaceful Coexistence is among many theatre and drama groups that have been actively campaigning for an end to the conflict in Darfur and the creation of improved socioeconomic conditions. Other active Darfuri drama groups—including Future Generations, Ajaweed, Darandouka, Al Masheesh, and Passions for Peace—share common goals: maintain the fabric of society, promote a culture of peace, encourage peace-building initiatives and raise awareness about important matters. To achieve these ends, they often collaborate with Government officials, local and international nongovernmental organizations, and UN agencies.

“Our goals include focusing on peace, healthcare, environmental awareness, water

conservation and education for all,” says Mr. Musab Omer, leader of the Future Generations drama group, explaining that his group has been working with NGOs, UN agencies and Government officials to put on productions. One such event was held for the Global Handwashing Day celebrations, during which members of the group performed before schoolchildren. “We tried to explain to students the importance of basic hygiene practices, such as cleaning their hands with soap,” says Mr. Omer.

Apart from focusing on such issue-specific messaging, theatre groups in Darfur have raised funds to aid communities in need. For example, Future Generations raised money to assist victims of seasonal floods in the vicinity of El Geneina, West Darfur. The group did not limit itself to collecting funds; members conducted drama performances to generate awareness about effective ways to address flooding.

Recognizing the popularity of theatre arts in Darfur, UNAMID has produced a serialized radio drama entitled “Rakubat Abba Salih” to highlight the importance

of dialogue in resolving conflicts. The serial drama, which is performed by some 20 individuals, focuses on many issues, including forced marriage and the importance of dialogue and freedom of expression.

Rakubat Abba Salih’s story revolves around a 20-year-old girl, Amina, and her struggle to defy her father’s attempt to marry her to someone against her will. As the drama unfolds, Amina finds support among family and friends in conversations that invoke concepts such as dignity, justice, equality and freedom. The drama not only has been broadcast over the radio, but also has come to life on stage. In one event, the people of Nyoro village in West Darfur celebrated the International Day of Human Rights. With the support of UNAMID and Government authorities, a local theatre group enacted the drama between Amina and her father.

Theatre, as a widely celebrated art form in Darfur, has continued to inspire audiences to think about important social issues in the context of the ongoing conflict. According to Dr. Abdalla, few other

“The performing arts are an important tool for carrying and conveying socially relevant messages to a diverse audience.”

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Members of the drama group Ashwaq Al Salam perform during the commemoration of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.





An actor, a member of the group Al Masheesh, performs during a theatrical presentation in Nyala, North Darfur, as part of a programme to address peace in Darfur. Several theatre and drama groups, operating under the umbrella of the Ministries of Culture across Darfur, are using their skill to play a role in highlighting specific concerns faced by Darfuri communities. Photo by Hamid Abdulsalam, UNAMID.

“Performance-based art enables individuals and communities to come together and engage in questions and concerns of relevance to all. Moreover, it provides people with a few hours of relief from the grim realities enforced upon them by the current situation in Darfur.”

—Omer Ali

modes of artistic expression are capable of having as powerful an impact on the popular imagination as theatre can. He says that the number of Darfuri students enrolling at the College for Music and Drama has risen in the past few years due to the potential they have in using drama as a way to generate positive social transformation in their communities.

One example of a young Darfuri making a difference with drama is Ms. Samiha Muniem, who says she believes drama can make a significant impact on society. Ms. Muniem graduated with a degree in theatre in 2011 and currently leads a drama group as a theatre director, spreading awareness

about conflict and social cohesion. Her work centres around issues related to street children, education and violence against women. “Theatre in Darfur can help heal rifts between community members, unify them and pave the way for peaceful coexistence and stability,” she says.

Theatre in Sudan is regularly celebrated in official competitions and festivals. Recently, World Theatre Day celebrations coincided with the 14th annual Al Bugga International Theatre Festival. During the event, the Sudanese Federal Minister of Culture, Mr. Al Taib Hassan Badawi, called theatre artists instrumental pillars for building the foundations for promot-

ing cultural diversity and maintaining coexistence and harmony among different communities. The occasion represented the first time the International Theatre Institute selected Sudan to host World Theatre Day festivities.

Sudanese and international theatre artists participated in the event, which was held under the theme “theatre for all people of Sudan.” The Al Masheesh drama group, a regular participant at Al Bugga International Festival, represented Darfuri thespians. “Taking part in such festivities is a chance to promote Darfuri culture,” says Mr. Ali Awadallah, a member of Al Masheesh group, explaining that such celebrations provide a forum for all artists to come together and learn from each other’s experiences.

As policymakers continue to work toward creating a viable roadmap for peace, reconstruction and development in Darfur, theatre and drama artists here play their part in helping to reknit Darfur’s social fabric in the hope of energizing communities to foster positive change and peaceful coexistence across the region. ■

Programmes Focus on Weapons Control, Community Security

Collaborative programmes to reduce the proliferation of light weapons are making progress in helping stabilise communities and improve security across Darfur.

BY SHARON LUKUNKA



On 23 May 2012 in Khartoum, Sudan, (from left to right) Minister of Interior of Sudan Ibrahim Mahmoud, Vice President of Sudan El-haj Adam Yousif and Director General of the Sudanese Police Hashi Osman chair the First Regional Conference of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The conference was set up to enhance coordination on small arms control among Sudan's neighbouring countries; strengthen security and stability in border areas; and promote sustainable peace and social and economic development in the region. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Protecting civilians, facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance across the region and contributing to a secure environment for economic reconstruction and development form the core mandate of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). While Mission personnel are working to implement each aspect of the mandate, one of the major challenges the Mission faces in contributing to peace and security here is the proliferation of small arms and other light weapons that pose a threat not only to civilians but also to Mission personnel and humanitarian workers.

Currently, across the UN, seven

peacekeeping missions and three political missions have mandates related to small arms. The widespread proliferation of light weapons continues to affect the work of UN peacekeepers in several contexts. For example, illicit small arms are contributing to security issues ranging from armed rebel groups in northern Mali to cattle rustlers in South Sudan.

The recent Secretary-General's report on small arms (S/2013/503) provides an update on the detrimental impact that the circulation of illicit small arms has on global peace and security. The report indicates that an estimated 875 million small arms are in circulation worldwide, many

of which are in the hands of insurgents, pirates, terrorists, transnational organized crime syndicates and armed gangs. Because they are inexpensive, portable and easy to conceal, the illicit trafficking of small arms presents a difficult and pervasive problem around the world.

In 2009, a Small Arms Survey conducted by the Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan (HSBA), an independent research project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, indicated that there were some 2.7 million small arms and light weapons in Sudan, more than two-thirds of which were circulating out-

side of state-controlled stockpiles. The Sudan Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (SDDRC) and the Ministry of Interior estimate that some 1.5 million small arms are in circulation in the country today, of which only 40 per cent are in the hands of Government law enforcement agencies. Such widespread arms proliferation among non-state actors has long been identified as a critical factor leading to the outbreak and escalation of armed violence and conflict in Darfur.

In his address to the UN Security Council earlier this year, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Mohamed Ibn Chambas expressed concern at the proliferation of arms among civilian groups. He underscored the fact that inter- and intra-communal violence has brought about more death, injury and displacement than the fighting between the Government and non-signatory armed movements in 2013. The UNAMID Head added that the deterioration of humanitarian conditions has played a key role in exacerbating tensions here. “The possession of small arms by civilians threatens not only peace but also all efforts in recovery, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration,” said Mr. Chambas.

DDR activities are crucial components of the stabilization of war-torn societies as well as their long-term development, so they are typically integrated into peace-process planning. But because the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) has not yet been signed by all armed movements, meaning no formal disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration can take place, UNAMID’s DDR section has been implementing a programme called community-based, labour-intensive projects (CLIPs). Such projects fall within the framework of what has come to be known as second-generation DDR—a collection of strategies and policies designed to address peace and security at the local level to help reduce conflict and set the stage for formal DDR activities.



A close-up of a weapon marked and registered on 30 January 2013 during the first programme held in El Geneina, West Darfur, to register and mark civilian arms with the goal of curbing their proliferation and thereby helping to reduce violence in the area. Photo by Caterina Violante, UNAMID.

“The possession of small arms by civilians threatens not only peace but also all efforts in recovery, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.”

—Mohamed Ibn Chambas

UNAMID’s DDR section has been implementing its violence-reduction strategy through CLIPs that include the construction of youth centres and schools, and involve vocational training in electronics, welding, handcrafts, brickmaking and so forth. These projects focus not only on vocational skills training and in many cases facilitating infrastructure development, but also on fostering reconciliation across Darfur. Essentially, CLIPs focus on issues related to the social exclusion of at-risk young people, who are exposed to potential mobilization into armed movements and criminal groups due to the lack of education, basic skills and employment opportunities.

The beneficiaries of these projects acquire livelihood and life skills designed

to improve their employability and social integration, and in the process are rebuilding their fragile communities alongside other community members. These projects are designed to result in a reduction of conflict in targeted areas. The focus of second-generation DDR programmes, thus, is shifted away from military structures toward the community as a whole.

At the heart of this concept of community stabilization and development is the issue of the presence of small arms in the hands of civilians. Article 71 of the DDPD states that “owing to the proliferation of small arms in the hands of civilians in Darfur, the parties, with the support of UNDP and UNAMID, shall develop a strategy and plans for

the implementation of a voluntary civilian arms control programme.” Keeping this directive in mind, UNAMID and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with partners here, have conducted numerous activities designed not only to help stabilise communities, but also to focus on small arms control with education workshops, consultations with community leaders and arms registration programmes at the national, state and local levels.

UNAMID and UNDP have developed several joint projects that bring together UNAMID’s CLIPs and UNDP’s Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) initiatives. According to UNDP reports, community consultations across five Darfur states have revealed that civilians are frustrated with the conflict and want comprehensive interventions designed to address the conflict’s causes. It is this issue that UNDP personnel are working to address with their CSAC projects, which are coordinated with UNAMID as

stipulated in the DDPD’s ceasefire and security arrangements provisions.

One noteworthy initiative to address these issues took place in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, where UNAMID’s DDR officers, working with a local implementing partner, funded a project to construct a vocational skills training centre, enabling young people to receive on-the-job training. Parallel to this project, UNDP worked to form a committee consisting of 25 Kabkabiya residents, who participated in a CSAC project steered by the Friends for Peace and Development Organization (FPDO), a national NGO.

Mr. Ahmed Mustapha, a Programme Officer at FPDO, explained that Kabkabiya already had imposed restrictive measures on small arms during the initial phases of the Darfur conflict. The UNDP CSAC initiative was designed to help solidify those measures. As part of the initiative, focal points were set up to report gunfire. Any weapons fire, including during special occasions, such as weddings, was banned

in the locality. While the ban was not entirely successful, a core component of the project was awareness-raising; the community residents in Kabkabiya and surrounding villages were trained in various civic skills, including conflict-resolution, peace-building, reproductive health and women’s rights, among other topics. In addition, a series of events were organized to raise awareness about the dangers associated with the unauthorised possession of small arms and light weapons.

Other similar projects have been undertaken in Graidia, South Darfur, where the Mission’s DDR section has been funding a secondary school, and in Kulbus, West Darfur, where UNAMID has facilitated training of at-risk young people by funding the construction of a recreational centre. UNDP is an equal partner in both these projects and has been working toward strengthening local capacities for peace through civic education and mobilizing young people to focus on community security and arms control. “The main objective of implementing such social reintegration-based CSAC projects is to contribute to sustainable peace, coexistence and security in Darfur,” said Mr. Mustapha.

In a significant step to measure progress in these areas, HSBA launched the Arms and Ammunition Tracing Desk for Sudan and South Sudan, with the objective being to refine previous estimates of the numbers and types of weapons among various Sudanese actors through focused field research; to apply tracing techniques employed by UN expert panels and other official bodies to investigate the origins and possible sourcing routes of weapons and ammunition; and to promote best practices for the identification and tracing of arms and ammunition in Sudan and South Sudan.

Moreover, to ensure efforts related to community stabilization and violence reduction are undertaken at the regional level, the SDDRC, UNAMID, UNDP and the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) formed a joint technical secretariat called the Sub-Regional Arms Control Mechanism (SARCOM), the framework for which was established in the Khartoum Declaration of May 2012. SARCOM’s objective is to coordinate the control of small arms and light weapons

“CSAC interventions can play a key role in creating conducive environments to effectively implement community stabilization.”

—Aderemi Adekoya

On 30 January 2013, the first registration and marking of civilian arms in West Darfur takes place in El Geneina. The initiative was set up to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and reduce violence in the area. Photo by Caterina Violante, UNAMID.





On 19 May 2014 in El Sereif, North Darfur, a civilian woman holds her weapon beside her children while attending a cultural and sports event organized by UNAMID as part a Darfur-wide “We Need Peace Now” campaign. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

across Sudan’s borders with Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo and Libya.

UNAMID is working with SARCOM to provide the necessary technical support so its partners can focus effectively on managing the cross-border proliferation of small arms and the illegal trafficking of weapons. SDDRC, UNAMID, UNDP and BICC are currently all developing options to enhance coordination on their common objectives and the programmes they are working to implement in Darfur in support of Government-led arms registration and arms control processes in Darfur.

Additionally, to help address the small arms issue in Sudan, in general, and in Darfur, in particular, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2117 on 26 September 2013, the Security Council’s first-ever resolution dedicated exclusively to the issue of small arms and light weapons. In the resolution, the Security Council expressed concern that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continued to cause significant loss of life

around the world. The resolution not only reminded governments of their obligation to comply with Council-mandated arms embargoes, but also reaffirmed the Council’s responsibility in monitoring the implementation of embargoes and its intention to strengthen monitoring mechanisms with additional staff in relevant missions.

In May 2012, Sudan organized a conference in Khartoum to focus on regional small arms control. The two-day conference, which was held as the “First Regional Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons,” was designed not only to foster greater awareness of issues related to small arms but also to develop more effective ways for Sudan to coordinate with its neighbours to reduce small arms in the region. The two-day event, organized by the Sudanese Ministry of Interior and the SDDRC in collaboration with the Embassy of Germany, UNDP and UNAMID, included representatives from Libya, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The specific objectives of the conference included creating a forum for

regional dialogue on the illegal trade, circulation and use of small arms; developing a harmonized regional approach to control small arms; developing a strategy for the disarmament, demobilizations and reintegration of combatants; and creating a unique and holistic mechanism to monitor small arms control programmes across the borders of participating countries. Consistent with the objectives of this conference, UNAMID and UN agencies have been working to support efforts in Darfur to address the issue of small arms and light weapons.

However, while many activities and programmes are underway to address this issue, it is widely believed that much more needs to be done to reduce the prevalence of these weapons and ensure the safety and security of communities across Darfur. “Sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants may not be possible unless the communities where they settle are stable and secure,” says Aderemi Adekoya, Chief of UNAMID’s DDR section. “CSAC interventions can therefore play a key role in creating conducive environments to effectively implement community stabilization.” ■

A Shoemaker Challenges Traditional Gender Roles

While Kaltoum Yagoub performs many of the traditional tasks commonly associated in Darfuri culture with the roles of wife, mother, sister and daughter, she works as a shoemaker, a profession that is typically undertaken by Sudanese men.

BY HAMID ABDULSALAM

Like many other Darfuri women, Ms. Kaltoum Yagoub plays a vital role in her family and community. However, while she lives and works in El Geneina, West Darfur, and performs many of the traditional tasks commonly associated in Darfuri culture with the roles of wife, mother, sister and daughter, Ms. Yagoub could be characterised as unique in that she works as a shoemaker, a profession that is typically undertaken by Sudanese men, especially in Darfur.

For nearly 30 years, Ms. Yagoub has been making shoes—and also a profit. She says her success can be attributed to patience and dedication in the face of many challenges, including local perceptions related to the traditional roles of women. Ms. Yagoub describes her motivation as being driven by the desire to help other women achieve success. As a result, she now regularly conducts workshops across Darfur to raise awareness about gender issues and women’s rights.

Such workshops, she says, are helping to bring change in her community by inspiring women to pursue education and contribute to their communities in unique ways. While Ms. Yagoub remains a steadfast advocate for girls continuing their education through university, she recounts how she was forced to leave school early because her aging parents were not able to afford her tuition. When she left school, she began to study shoemaking with her older brothers, who were well versed in the practice.

After many long years refining her skills making *Markoubs*—a unique kind of shoe specifically designed for men—Ms. Yagoub has achieved international recognition for her handiwork. Her shoes have been exported to Saudi Arabia and other countries, and are said to be among the best-selling at markets catering to Sudanese communities abroad.

Ms. Yagoub, who is married with four daughters, recently decided to return to school. “As I am currently 42, I have discovered my weakness and how to address it; I have been patient and focused,” she says, noting that while she is older than her teachers, she considers education a foundation for communities. Ms. Yagoub has finished her primary education and is currently enrolled in secondary school.

Apart from taking classes and continuing her work making shoes, Ms. Yagoub participates in many workshops focused on women’s issues, such as leadership and decision-making. These workshops, which have been organized by local associations and UN agencies, address issues related to human rights and conflict resolution. Ms. Yagoub attends these workshops not only as a participant, but also as a lecturer, recounting her unique story and talking about her business.

As a result of her advocacy efforts, Ms. Yagoub has been recognized formally by the Sudanese Women’s General Association, the West Darfur Ministry of Agriculture, and by UNAMID. “UNAMID has been working to contribute to the empowerment of women, especially during women-focused events such as International Women’s Day,” she says.

While she has amassed a large collection of certificates and awards honouring her, she has not been complacent; she continues to make shoes and find ways to revitalize her community and inspire the girls growing up in West Darfur. “My message is geared to supporting women and advocating for their pivotal role in education,” she says, indicating that her desires reflect those of other women struggling to make a difference in this conflict-torn region. “I am Kaltoum, Mariam, Amina and each and every woman in Darfur.” ■



- 1 Ms. Kaltoum Yagoub, 42 years old, is from El Geneina, West Darfur. While Ms. Yagoub performs many of the traditional tasks commonly associated in Darfuri culture with the roles of wife, mother, sister and daughter, she works as a shoemaker, a profession that is typically undertaken by Sudanese men.
- 2 Ms. Yagoub makes *Markoubs*, a unique kind of shoe specifically designed for men. Possibly the only woman in Darfur dedicated to making such shoes, she has achieved international recognition for her handiwork. Ms. Yagoub's shoes have been exported to Saudi Arabia and other countries.
- 3 Ms. Yagoub adjusts one of her *Markoubs* in the final steps of the production process in her house in El Geneina, West Darfur. Her shoes, which are sold locally and internationally, are said to be among the best-selling shoes at markets catering to Sudanese communities abroad.





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Ms. Yagoub finalizes the fabrication of a shoe, making its natural form to sew in the last pieces. Forced to leave school early because her aging parents could not afford her tuition, she began to study shoemaking with her older brothers, who were well versed in the practice.

5

A collection of Markoubs recently finished by Ms. Yagoub, who has spent more than 30 years working in the shoemaking business and refining her craft to the point where she has developed a reputation, nationally and internationally, as one of the most talented shoemakers in Darfur.

6

Ms. Yagoub is pictured attending a class in El Geneina, West Darfur. Ms. Yagoub, who is married with four daughters, recently decided to return to school. She is older than her teachers, but says she considers education a foundation for Darfur's communities.

7

Ms. Yagoub, at her home in El Geneina, West Darfur, cuts a piece of leather to make a Markoub. On the floor in front of her are several certificates and awards. Ms. Yagoub has received recognition for her community contributions, and has acquired skills in several other fields, but continues to make shoes.

8

Ms. Yagoub is pictured beside her car, which she bought from money she earned from her shoemaking business. As a result of Ms. Yagoub's work in paving new paths for Darfuri women, she has been recognized formally by the Sudanese Women's General Association and the Ministry of Agriculture.

9

In addition to paving new paths for women by working as a shoemaker, a vocation typically chosen in Sudan by men, Ms. Yagoub drives her own car. Women drivers in Darfur have become less rare than in the past, but it is still fairly uncommon for women to drive their own cars here.





Ms. Amal Mohamed, a well-respected artist from El Fasher, North Darfur, works in her house on handcrafted goods that have earned her a unique reputation for blurring the traditional distinction between craft and art. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

Elevating Craft into Art: An Interview with Amal Mohamed

In an interview with *Voices of Darfur*, Ms. Amal Mohamed talks about her work as an artist and media professional, and about the role artists can play in helping to advance peace in Darfur.

BY ALA MAYYAH

Born in 1980 in El Fasher, North Darfur, Ms. Amal Mohamed has developed a reputation as a designer with a unique approach to using beads, stones and other materials to make jewellery and household items that blur traditional distinctions between art and craft.

Ms. Mohamed, who also works in television as an executive director, holds two diplomas—one in science and technology from Sudan University and one in media studies from the College of Media at Um Durman Islamic University. While she works during the day at the TV and

Radio Commission in El Fasher, a job she has held since 2004, she continues to make artwork in various forms in her spare time, and has shown her pieces in El Fasher and at Khartoum exhibits.

In an interview with *Voices of Darfur*, Ms. Mohamed talked about her work as an artist and media professional, and about the role artists can play in helping to advance peace in Darfur.

Voices of Darfur: How did you start using beads to create your designs?

Mohamed: I started designing art pieces made of beads in 2009. I was cap-

tivated by this art form when I saw some items a friend had created. I learned the basics from her, and initially began by using beads to decorate small objects, such as tissue holders, key rings, vases, pen holders and other articles that can be used at home or in the office.

In the beginning, ornamenting such items was just a hobby for me. I brought some of them to the office, and my colleagues appreciated them, so I made similar pieces by request. Gradually, the requests increased and I started charging for my work, albeit nominally. I sold my first piece



Examples of the art pieces made by Ms. Amal Mohamed. While the form of her pieces derives from their intended function as household items, the artistry of her work has developed a distinct reputation that has led to the presence of her pieces at various exhibits, including in Khartoum. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

“Establishing a peaceful solution to the conflict will help advance development projects; these, in turn, will create jobs for Darfuris across the region.”

to a TV director who works with me. Today, creating these pieces has become an additional occupation that gives me great joy. It is a way to express myself and also produce extra income.

VoD: What other items or pieces of art do you design?

Mohamed: I design and make jewellery, particularly necklaces and bracelets, for women. And I embroider tablecloths and chair throws, as there is a high demand for such products. Additionally, I decorate *mendulas* with some accessories. A *mendula* is a food container made of palm fronds, and is traditionally used in Darfur. For example, I attach stones, locally called *al-veda*, and small plastic pieces, known as *susuk*, in different colours and sizes on the *mendula*'s surface. These embellished *mendulas*, in fact, are the bestselling items in my collection.

VoD: What materials, other than beads and stones, do you use to create pieces of jewellery?

Mohamed: I use metal and leather lace, as well as gold and silver catenaries, to make various designs that cater to diverse tastes.

VoD: Do you find all these materials easily in the local markets?

Mohamed: The different kinds of beads I use are available in the El Fasher markets. However, I face great difficulty in finding most of the other materials; I usually source these from Khartoum when I'm travelling. Occasionally, I ask a friend or my sisters, who live in the capital, to ship necessary items to me by air. This adds to the total cost of the finished piece. Therefore, acquiring the resources essential to my craft is often a financial challenge, and takes time and effort.

VoD: Is this sort of art with beads traditionally Darfuri, and is making the pieces primarily an activity undertaken by women?

Mohamed: Actually, it is a relatively new art form in Darfur. Products decorated and embellished with beads appeared

in Darfur in the early 21st century. These early pieces, whether imported or locally made, mostly originated in Khartoum. Darfuri women liked them instantly and some started designing and selling similar objects. Since then, artwork using beads as a primary element has become increasingly popular, and there is a growing demand for it in Darfur.

VoD: What are your sources for inspiration? Do you create modern or traditional designs?

Mohamed: My own imagination is my main source for new designs. Coupled with this, anything in my surroundings could inspire me. Sometimes a beautiful flower might stimulate my creativity, or an image in a magazine or even a nice pattern woven in fabric. I'm usually more inclined toward modern designs than traditional ones. I think an ordinary piece, such as the *mendula*, looks nicer when it is decorated with a modern design, whether lines or flowers or other shapes. Also, I have discovered that people prefer traditional pieces to be decorated with a contemporary perspective.

VoD: Have you ever showcased your art in any exhibitions?

Mohamed: I have participated in three exhibitions. The first was an individual exhibition in 2011 and was held at the Wali's (Governor's) residence, the Presidential House, in North Darfur. This exhibition was sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, Antiquities and Wildlife. I displayed almost 100 pieces decorated with beads; they were well received by the attendees, including Darfuri women, Government officials as well as my own family members, relatives and colleagues.

My second exhibit was at the Khartoum International Fair, 2014, an annual art exhibition organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Antiquities and Wildlife in the capital. Artists from all Sudanese states were invited. Along with other Darfuri artists, I showcased more than 350 pieces. It took me three months to produce these pieces. Unfortunately, the attendance and sales were rather disappointing.

My third exhibit was also in Khartoum; I presented some 14 pieces at this venue, but was unable to attend personally on account

of my professional television commitments.

VoD: How did you become so prolific in producing such intricate pieces of art?

Mohamed: I think it's innate; I'm blessed with this talent. However, I have improved with constant practice and experience.

VoD: And do you have any other means for selling your pieces, besides exhibitions?

Mohamed: I sell my pieces in shops and stationery counters in the local markets; I'm also planning to create a Facebook page to promote and sell my work.

VoD: Has the difficult economy in Darfur affected your customers' ability to buy your work, or do you have regular customers who can afford to buy multiple pieces?

Mohamed: Actually, I don't have regular customers. Sales were better in the past two years in comparison to the present. But the economic situation in Darfur is getting more difficult with each passing year and certainly impacts people's ability to buy ornaments and accessories.

VoD: Many women's arts in Darfur are income-generating. Do Darfuri women create such pieces because they love art or are they doing it due to financial need?

Mohamed: Both reasons are valid. Darfuri women inherently love fine arts and artefacts, but their economic situation has resulted in such crafts becoming a means for generating extra income. Merely selling these items doesn't generate enough money for someone to survive, as they provide a very small income. But each piece is most definitely imbued with a love for the arts.

VoD: Is there a women's centre in El Fasher that teaches beadwork and other crafts to help women increase their income?

Mohamed: Yes, there are some such training centres. They are usually busy places, especially the non-profit ones, although even the other centres don't charge high fees. All these centres are designed to empower women financially and enable them to increase their profits.

VoD: You work in the media, specifically radio and television. Tell us more about this.

Mohamed: I have been working at the North Darfur State TV and Radio Commission since 2004. This job was my first love,



Artist Amal Mohamed is pictured in her home in El Fasher, North Darfur, beside some of the pieces she has created. Ms. Mohamed, who has developed a reputation for her unique bead designs, works during the day as an executive television director television director for the North Darfur State TV and Radio Commission. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID

both professionally and in terms of art as well. I always wanted to be a television director, and was excited when I was hired for the role. I look forward to directing various programmes about culture and drama, and connecting with artists and artistic people. For me, the importance of the work I do centres around the opportunity to communicate with the people of Darfur and other Darfuri artists. The programmes I direct deliver messages and ideas that help in social development and enhance a culture of peace among Darfuri communities.

VoD: Are singers doing better professionally in comparison to fine-art practitioners in Darfur?

Mohamed: Well, yes. Singers are in a much better position than those who create fine art in Darfur. I believe this is because fine art requires a specific audience that possesses an aesthetic sensibility as well as the financial capability to purchase paintings or sculpture, for example. On the other hand, nowadays, songs can be obtained easily in digital format through friends or other sources. Also, radio and TV sets are available in many houses, including in the camps for the internally displaced. Singers and actors, therefore, can reach their audience with far greater ease.

VoD: How can contemporary Darfuri artists contribute effectively to spreading a culture of peace?

Mohamed: Unfortunately, I feel that some Darfuri artists are not contributing

actively to activities that promote peace. Perhaps this is because of the frustration resulting from the ongoing conflict and the overall difficult situation in addition to the delay in achieving sustainable peace. However, I believe that if all artists produced and displayed art with messages of peace, this alone could be effective in encouraging people to move toward reconciliation and tolerance. Art is one of the most influential avenues to reach out to the public, especially the youth.

VoD: Are you optimistic about having a better life if peace comes to Darfur? Or do you believe that the global economic crisis might continue to create problems for Darfur?

Mohamed: Personally, I am optimistic that the situation will be better after comprehensive peace, despite the economic crisis. Establishing a peaceful solution to the conflict will help advance development projects; these, in turn, will create jobs for Darfuris across the region. Eventually, therefore, the situation will definitely improve.

VoD: If you could say one thing to the people of Darfur, what would it be?


Mohamed: I would like to tell them that there has been enough of conflict and blood. Let us solve our problems with tolerance, love and determination to create a better future for the children and women of Darfur. This can only be achieved when men put down their weapons and embark upon a phase of reconciliation and peace. ■



Examples of the art pieces made by Ms. Amal Mohamed. While the form of her pieces derives from their intended function as household items, the artistry of her work has developed a distinct reputation that has led to the presence of her pieces at various exhibits, including in Khartoum. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.



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